

## *f i r s t*

AMERICAN CHILDREN'S  
SAFETY SOURCE™



Public awareness is being raised concerning the national tragedy of missing children. Not all missing children are runaways; some children just seem to vanish without a trace.

We cannot always be with our children, so we must trust their intelligence and good judgment. We can teach our children to be alert to the world by giving them knowledge to cope with the times they may find themselves in danger. This folder outlines precautions

that can help to protect your children from abduction.

**1** Parents can help to protect their children by teaching them awareness of dangerous people and the lures used to entice children. Children should be AWARE not AFRAID of the dangers! Through education, perhaps we can prevent a child's disappearance.

**2** Set aside a time to talk to your children about dangerous people and strangers. Gear the talk to your children's level of understanding. Be straightforward without frightening the sensitive child. Be willing to talk and listen to anything your children may want to report. Never underestimate their fears or concerns. Children should trust their feelings and know that you are always concerned for their safety.

**3** Keep current files on your children. Include a recent photograph (update four times a year for children under two), physical description, extra activities, and friends' names, addresses, and phone numbers. Obtain a set of footprints or fingerprints through local law enforcement or qualified professionals. Maintain dental or medical records.



## safety tips

**4** Abductors usually select a child they think will be an easy target. They look for children who walk to school alone, take shortcuts, or seem to be alienated from other children. Quite often they watch playgrounds and observe children's play habits. Alert your children to the dangerous vacant lots, alleyways, etc., on their route to and from school.

**5** Be extremely cautious when selecting someone to care for your children. Meet them and check their references. If children must be left alone, explain the proper way to answer the telephone and the door.



**6** Teach your children their full name and yours, phone number with area code, and address with zip code. They should know how to make local and long distance calls; use a pay phone; call home and law enforcement departments; and dial "O" for an operator or 9-1-1 in an emergency.

**7** Mentally note the clothes your children wear EVERY DAY. Avoid putting names visibly on clothing or belongings. Know where your children are at all times. Never leave them unattended in a public place, car, or store. Children should play in supervised areas only.

**8** Be sure your children know what to do if you are separated while shopping. They should not look for you: they should go to the nearest clerk and ask for help!

**9** Explain who a stranger is. Children should never enter a stranger's home, get into their car, or take gifts from them. Explain when a child has the right to say NO to an adult. Be aware of anyone who pays an unusual amount of attention to your children. Listen to your children if they do not want to be left alone with someone. Ask them to tell you about anyone who asks them to keep a secret or any new adults they meet.



**10** As a family, choose a secret code word. Instruct your children never to go with anyone who does not know the code word. Stress that the word is a secret. Change it frequently. Ask the school or day care center to notify you immediately if your children are absent. Inform them of the people authorized to pick up your children. Have the same person pick them up every day if possible.



**11** Encourage your children to use the buddy system. Advise them what to do if a stranger follows or approaches them. Get to know your neighbors and establish "safe homes" where children can go for help.